

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please replace paragraph 0040 with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0040] Each information-bearing optical signal produced by an optical transmitter constitutes a channel in optical system 10. In a WDM system, each channel is generally associated with a unique wavelength. As depicted in FIG. 1, six optical transponders 20₁-20₆ are provided to create a six-channel wavelength division multiplexed optical communication system along transmission path 40₁ and six optical transponders 60₁-60₆ are provided to create a six-channel wavelength division multiplexed optical communication system along transmission path 40₂. The optical transmitters located within transponders 20₁-20₆ operate at channel wavelengths of λ_1 - λ_6 , respectively. These optical signal channels are output from transponders 20₁-20₆ and are brought together in optical switch 30₁ for conveyance to optical waveguide 40₁ via output port 26₁ in the form of a multiplexed optical signal. Optical switch 30₁ has six input ports that are optically coupled to the six transponders 20₁-20₆ through optical waveguides 22₁-22₆. Likewise, the optical transmitters located within transponders 60₁-60₆ also operate at channel wavelengths of λ_1 - λ_6 respectively. These optical signal channels are output from transponders 60₁-60₆ and are brought together in optical switch 32₂ for conveyance to optical waveguide 40₂ via output port 26₂. Optical transmission path 40₁ is typically an optical waveguide and is the principal transmission medium for the optical communication system. While the optical waveguide is generally selected from single-mode optical, any optical waveguiding medium which is capable of transporting multiple optical wavelengths can be employed as waveguide 40₁ in optical system 10. Similar to optical switch 30₁, optical switch 32₂ provides a multiplexed optical signal along optical transmission path 40₂. Following transmission and amplification of the multiplexed optical signals along waveguides